



CITY OF OLMSTED FALLS
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
JANUARY 15, 2025
7:30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Commission Members Present: Brett lafigliola, Garry Thompson, Brian Chitester, Michelle Hawkins, Heidi Meehan, and Randy Abood. John Campbell was excused. Others Present: Nick Sommer, representing applicant. Audience: 1.

Acting Chairman Brett lafigliola called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. lafigliola stated that the chairman and vice-chairman need to be voted on for the beginning of this year.

Mr. Thompson **nominated** Brett lafigliola to be the chairman for the 2025 year; Mr. Chitester **seconded**. Poll: 6 ayes; 0 nays. **Motion carried**.

Mr. Chitester **nominated** Garry Thompson as Vice-Chairman for the 2025 year; Mr. Abood **seconded**. Poll: 6 ayes; 0 nays. **Motion carried**.

1. **Planning & Zoning Case # 01-2025** - A request by NVR, Inc., representing Willis Boyer, owner of vacant land on Mapleway Drive, PP# 291-20-002 pursuant to Sections 1260.10 and 1232.05, for an informal discussion to build a 196 unit development consisting of 136 townhomes and 60 single family dwellings in an MUTND zoning district; set a Conditional Use Permit public hearing.

Nick Sommer, 6770 Snowville Road, Brecksville, Ohio, stated that his understanding is that tonight's meeting is an informal discussion and to set a date for the public hearing. He stated that there are 196 units, roughly broken down into 136 townhome units, which are split close to 50/50 with 64 being two-story traditional colonial units and 72 three-story slab with garages on the first floor. The 72 units would predominately be located next to the industrial complex on the south and southeast sides of the project. The thought was to create buffering and pull the 72 three-story units away from the residents on Cranage. The 64 two-story colonials would be on the northern side, traditional style as we thought those would fit in better with the residents located there. The single-family homes are located further into the site towards the west and there are 60 of those units.

He stated that there are numerous constraints on the site, three gas wells, a tank battery, electrical transmission lines, wetlands, and limited frontage. The original contract did not include the section in Olmsted Township but that would lead to a cul-de-sac in the back of the community and we do not prefer that as we thought connectivity was important. Another constraint is that the riparian setback poses some challenges, but we are looking to bring that into the community as a focal point with numerous lots backing up to it and a bridge crossing it in order to have open access and common space for anyone to utilize.

He stated that when designing the site they wanted walkability with connectivity to all the schools, downtown Olmsted Falls, the community center, library and the park system. He noticed in city's comprehensive plan there were trail systems so we incorporated an eight foot wide cement path from Fitch to Mapleway through the entire site on the northern side as well as a secondary walkway which is the standard four foot sidewalk on the southern part of the streets. We have not shown any amenities and we obviously know those would make the site much more marketable and would like to discuss those. The product mix is not finalized; and buffering and parking are two major issues to look at. He knows that one of the objections will be the density and the main entrance off of Mapleway. To be transparent if that entrance is a single load street he struggles with the feasibility of the project especially after acquiring the extra piece in the township and has to get density somewhere on the site in order to obtain that piece.

He knows that buffering is important and needs to be discussed to protect the residents on Cranage as well as parking. His last point is that there is no commercial and knows that is part of the MUTND; we had some interest but he really struggled with how that would fit and where to located it with limited access from Fitch or Mapleway. He knows that residential is probably not going to be popular with the residents on Cranage and feels that commercial would be even less popular.

Mr. lafigliola stated that the applicant is here requesting that the commission set a date for a public hearing. The applicant is under no obligation to accept any recommendations but hopefully he is willing to accept comments that the commission offers.

Mr. Chitester stated that he was going to ask about the parking and does appreciate that the applicant did point that out. His only concerns are the three-story townhomes in the area as this particular area homes are ranches or bungalows.

Mr. Thompson stated that this is a difficult site to develop and always has been. He remembers Mr. Boyer proposing a mobile home park on the site and at that time that could have possibly happened because it was a business. Originally this property was zoned I-2 and was changed to MUTND approximately 10 years ago. He has a little difficulty giving up the 10% commercial but is unsure where it could be placed and how it would work. As far as the piece of property in the township has anyone considered annexing that to the falls as that is probably the only way you are going to get this property under one jurisdiction. Mr. Sommer stated that is more and more what it is looking like. Mr. Thompson stated that he does not believe the township would object but no one likes that word. Mr. Sommer stated that his initial conversation with the township was not very positive about the site. Mr. Thompson asked if he was looking to bridge Minnie Creek. Mr. Sommer replied yes. Mr. Thompson asked if it would be a box culvert.

Cody Bruce, 6770 West Snowville Road, Brecksville, Ohio stated that he does not know if there is a large flood plain but there are some wetlands around the area. Ideally they would box culvert it depending on what our disturbances are to the wetland and linear stream footages, we would look at four or three sided but not a bridge because he does not believe there is enough flood plain length to warrant a full span. He stated that DVC would go through designing and make sure there are no issues with potential backups or flooding

upstream. Mr. Thompson stated that normally there is not much water in the creek but as he understands it when it does it spreads out and he does not want to have a little straw that we are trying to put a lot of water through because that doesn't work and we have that problem in other places in the city. Mr. Bruce stated that they would do an analysis and whatever the city requirements would be from the engineering department to make sure there are no backups.

Jay McFadden, 25925 Elmer Avenue, asked if all the stormwater would go into Minnie Creek. Mr. Bruce stated that they have not gotten that far in the plans but if that is the way the site is currently draining then that is the way they would run the water as well. Mr. McFadden asked if anything would tie into the Cuyahoga County storm system. Mr. Bruce stated that it depends how the water is currently running on the site, he imagines everything drains towards the center. Mr. McFadden stated that he is concerned because we currently have storm issues on Mapleway and he does not want to add to that. Mr. Iafigliola stated these are things that will need to be addressed in final engineering. Mr. McFadden asked if they knew where the sanitary sewer would go. Mr. Bruce stated that there is a main line on Mapleway that has the depth.

Mr. Iafigliola stated that this is a difficult site and thinks we can all acknowledge that and hopes the comments he is going to make will help improve the project overall. This is a super dense development, you are proposing 196 units and knows what the applicant's math says about what is allowed but there is some interesting math being done by indicating the area that cannot be built in. He asked how much setback there was relative to each lot. Mr. Sommer stated that the lot width varies from 50 to 55. Mr. Iafigliola asked what would be typical. Mr. Sommer stated 50 foot. Mr. Iafigliola stated that it looks like you are proposing a house footprint of 40 feet wide with a five foot setback on each side. Mr. Sommer stated that the product line would vary from 38 to 40. Mr. Iafigliola stated that this is very dense with very skinny lots in order to fit in a lot of units. He stated that amenities were mentioned but are not necessarily for today's discussion but when the applicant returns it would be important to explain what those will be. This site has a long history in Olmsted Falls both from lawsuits, gas wells and he does expect a crowd so it would be helpful if you could articulate a little as to what those amenities would be and whether or not those amenities are considered public use or private HOA use.

Mr. Iafigliola stated that he appreciates the breakdown in the number of units but did not know that some were taller than others and asked if the applicant could vary their color coding scale if you are going to have three story units so it is clear.

Mr. Iafigliola asked what the riparian distance he was using. Mr. Sommer stated that he would have reconfirm but believes its off the high water mark. Mr. Iafigliola stated that partly why he is asking is the city's riparian setback has changed and being out side of the flood plain or ordinary high water mark does not necessarily need to match so if there was a way to say you are within the riparian but we can make our project better for certain reasons and not be in the flood plain that might be something we could consider.

Mr. Iafigliola stated that the entry way definitely needs improvements the road is straight and he knows the applicant does not want to make it anything less than straight and if a

curve is put in someone will gain a couple feet and some will lose but we cannot have a canyon wall for 100's of feet something has to happen. He suggested staggering front to back. He knows if you can put a slight curve in it would be better and the other concern is it's just like a drag strip, too flat, and too a lot of things.

He stated that he talked to some members of the administration and the initial comment under the context of commercial versus residential split was that they would like to see some commercial up front. He would like the applicant to speak about why they think commercial or professional is inappropriate or unfeasible use at the front or anywhere in the development; in other words you have to make the case saying this would not make sense and here is why we should waive that piece.

Mr. lafigliola stated that it does not seem the applicant is giving a lot of room for any kind of entry way of any significance. He knows that a lot of Ryan Homes developments have more formal entries and what he is thinking is an option to slow people down, some kind of landscape median not a roundabout but something in that direction so you can't just blast through the street. You might have to move those units apart or widen the road or the right-of-way. This cannot be the way it's currently drawn; you have houses 1-30 and 109-36 with a long canyon run so you will have to think about something to do there. Mr. Sommer stated that might allow for some parking or cluster mailboxes.

Mr. lafigliola stated that it would also be helpful to show, within reason, where the existing houses are located and whether the structure is a house or garage as this will tell us if you are building a three-story unit would it be an appropriate spot if the houses on Cranage are closer to the development. He thinks we have to be more sensitive if they are further away and the drawing as shown does not provide that context.

The other detail is the former industrial property on the southeast corner of the site, rather than show these details that kind of omit what is happening there put them somewhere else so we can see what is happening here. Again, you conveniently omitted the parking lots and the background.

Mr. lafigliola stated that having that dimension would be helpful because as we look at what is referred to as a double load, houses on both sides of the street, it would be helpful to do the math and determine why it fits or doesn't fit. Mr. Sommer stated that regarding the double load we put some thought into each driveway, from the back of sidewalk it is at least 21 feet so you could get four cars in the driveway without impeding sidewalks. Mr. lafigliola stated that the applicant mentioned an eight-foot walk which is wide for a sidewalk but skinny for a trail and asked what the applicant was envisioning. Mr. Sommer stated some type of pedestrian connectivity throughout the site. Again, he is getting to eight-foot and knows that the master plan was doing mainly asphalt on either side but he does not see that meshing with concrete driveways in between each section, which is how we got to the concrete. Mr. lafigliola stated that he would say concrete is an upgrade over asphalt but his concern is there anyway to de-couple the pedestrian walkway from in front of the houses. In other words, lots 1-30 all have driveways so its fine for a sidewalk but not great trail design because every single driveway is a possibility of a child getting hit by a vehicle as he rides his bike down the trail. Is there a way to run this trail through another area that

is more green space or behind homes. He will say that he was personally involved in a project in Elyria where there is a driveway and the sidewalk was basically removed and a trail installed and there were a lot of driveways, there were more driveways than trails.

Mr. Chitester asked if the applicant could point out if these homes are similar or different than the ones being built in the other two developments that Ryan Homes are involved in. Mr. Sommer stated yes.

Mr. Thompson stated that with lots 1 and 136 he thinks there is a line drawn where the front of the neighboring house to the north on Mapleway is but it's covered up with a label, he asked that the label be moved so that the commission can at least see the unit is more forward of that house. Mr. lafigliola stated that basically you are slamming a large building with at least three units immediately into the neighbor on Mapleway and asked if there was a way to start that building beyond the back of his house or at least at his garage that would give more of an entryway and sensitivity to the neighbor has to be provided. Mr. Thompson stated that he has never been a fan of houses being up towards the front of the street; a perfect example is on Root Road, the sides of the houses face the street, and they back up against the existing houses, it looks like the houses were sandwiched in. He stated that this development does not have a good entrance way where other developments have wider or more of a boulevard entryway, it could cost a few units, but it is all about design, appearance and how it's going to look coming into this area as you have a very dense area as it is. He is also concerned about the townhouses they are right up against the setback, people will want to add things and then we have to deal with those later, patios and different things off the back.

Mr. lafigliola moved to **schedule** the conditional use public hearing for Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.; Mr. Chitester **seconded**. Voice Vote: 6 ayes; 0 nays. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Sommer stated that in this hypothetical scenario, if losing density comes at the expense of getting the secondary piece in Olmsted Township would that be worth it. Mr. lafigliola stated that this commission cannot speak to anything that relates to the township but if that other entrance didn't exist because of whatever reason essentially you are left with a very dense development with a single exit and entryway, which he does not love. What he has seen professionally is that anytime there is an issue for emergency vehicles, general maintenance, or a utility wants to dig a trench you are just asking for trouble. Mr. Sommer stated that he thinks he can get an emergency access through that piece but it would not be a formal street, for the sake of ingress or egress. Mr. lafigliola stated that the other issue that is not great is now you have the entire development funneling one area and he cannot think of another development that has as many units with a single entry point. Let's just say it would not be preferred.

Mr. Sommer stated that if there was a way to finagle the walking paths out of front yards would there be a need for sidewalks. Mr. lafigliola asked if he was talking about sidewalks in general. Mr. Sommer stated that if he could relocate the walking path to the back yards would a sidewalk in the front yard be needed. Mr. lafigliola stated that in his opinion the applicant will have four foot sidewalks on both sides of the street. One of beauties of

sidewalks is just being neighborly, he remembers when Mr. Boyer presented the entire MUTND concept to the city, one of the big selling points was the old-style neighborhood with front porches it was kind of a relic look even at that time. The point of the MUTND is to allow for higher density but also to have more of a neighborhood feel.

Mr. Thompson asked if they thought about putting the single-family homes in the front on one side of the entranceway and then the townhouses in the back. Mr. Sommer stated that this design allows the single family units to be in the most desirable section of the property. Mr. Thompson stated that it does not have to be the whole length. Mr. Sommer stated that going back to single loading does not paint a pretty picture for the feasibility of the project.

John Walsh, GBC Design, 565 White Pond Drive, Akron, stated that for the straight section of road and the desire to put curves in, would the commission consider relief to the rear setbacks, and he is thinking more on the commercial side. Mr. Iafigliola stated that without committing he would say it is a possibility.

Mr. McFadden stated that the lots seem tiny for the townhomes and asked if there were different lot size regulations for a home versus a townhome. Mr. Iafigliola asked what the ownership structure of the units would be. Mr. Sommer stated they would be fee simple owner occupied, which means the residents would have full ownership of the interior and exterior of their unit. Any townhome Ryan Homes builds the homeowner pay's into and HOA for all common space, roads, driveways, salt, which is all maintained by the HOA. Homeowners do not have any singular lot maintenance everything is paid for and done through the HOA for that portion of the development. Mr. Iafigliola asked whether these would be public or private streets. Mr. Sommer stated that right now they are all structured as public.

Mr. Abood stated that these will be either two or three story townhomes, so one continuous building of multiple units. Mr. Sommer stated that was correct and all the same style. Mr. Abood stated that it looks like there are eight units per structure. Mr. Sommer responded yes. Mr. Abood stated that eight seems like a lot.

Mr. McFadden stated that when he built his home each house needed half an acre and asked if these homes would be half acre lots. Mr. Sommer stated that is not what is being proposed. Mr. Iafigliola stated that the entire development is essentially multi-family and single family. If you look at lot 157, it shows 50 feet wide by 175 which is roughly a quarter acre. Mr. McFadden asked if that met the new guidelines. Mr. Iafigliola stated this is a different type of zoning; it is not so much a minimum lot size per unit its more over the development overall, so it is "x" number of units per acre of the development. In this development the total area is 54 acres; special natural area corridor is 6 acres, that's a net of 48 acres; open space requirement is 1200 square feet of land per dwelling unit; which deducts five acres; common space is another 20% which deducts another 10; so the applicant is saying that they are providing 43% of open space and of that the allowable density in this area is 218 units and they are proposing 196 units.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT – Mr. Chitester welcomed Mr. Iafigliola back to Planning and Zoning and congratulated him on his vote as chairman. He was happy to see council voting unanimously to re-appoint him.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Thompson moved to **approve** the minutes of November 20, 2024, as presented; Mr. Chitester **seconded**. Voice Vote: 6 ayes; 0 nays. **Motion carried**.

OTHER BUSINESS – *None*

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Iafigliola moved to **adjourn**; Mr. Thompson **seconded**. Voice Vote: 6 ayes; 0 nays. **Motion carried**.

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Planning & Zoning Commission Clerk

Date

Planning & Zoning Chairman

Date